

354.76
T6J
912
2-+

INTERchange

Employee Newsletter

October 1992

IN THIS ISSUE

The Strategic Plan employee team developed proposed objectives for Strategic Initiative #3 regarding organizational effectiveness and improving MDT's work environment.

A Baker snowplow driver placed first overall in a statewide "snow rodeo" among drivers from MDT and local Montana governments.

Help Yourself gives tips on balancing parenting and a job, outdoor health tips, ideas for interviewing, tips on bad habits, and help with lowering cholesterol.

Service awards and retirements at MDT.

Director's Column



I would like to hardily thank all the members of employee task forces who have worked hard this past two months to develop ideas and solutions in support of the seven Strategic Initiatives. I feel confident your combined efforts will contribute greatly to the future services of MDT.

See **DIRECTOR**, page 8

Public Forums Inform, Involve

MDT Planning & Programming and Public Affairs Staff spent much of September educating and being educated at a series of Transportation forums across the state.

Sixteen public forums were scheduled with the goals of informing the public about the department and gaining public input about needed services and the future of MDT.

There's been good turn out and positive interaction between MDT and the public, said Sandy Straehl Chief of Highway Planning.

"We're getting a lot of comment," she said, adding, people "may be hostile when they come in, but they generally thank us when they leave."

Those attending are interested in how the system is managed, but several local concerns are also expressed, said Straehl.

"While these forums are required by the planning provisions of the new federal transportation act, we're hoping to use them as a first step in a proactive public involvement process," said Director John Rothwell.

The ISTEA requires the state to form a statewide transportation plan and requires that the public be involved in the planning process, said Straehl.

"It (the forum) also aligns with the

strategic plan. We are going to more actively involve the public in the transportation planning process," Straehl said.

Many Montanans are unfamiliar with the restructuring of the department which made it a department of transportation and are unclear of how that differs from a department of highways, Straehl said.



We Need Your 2¢ Worth

Information about new requirements of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act (ISTEA) will also be shared to help people understand the funding needs of the department.

A portion of the forum is dedicated to a description of upcoming transportation projects and attendants were asked for input for new projects.

See **FORUMS**, page 5

Strategic Initiative #3 Objectives Proposed

After meeting on Sept. 15 and 16, the Strategic Plan employee team has developed proposed objectives for Strategic Initiative #3.

This initiative is to "improve organizational effectiveness, efficiency and overall work environment, including attracting, developing and retaining the best employees."

These objectives will be presented to the Strategic Plan Steering Committee with objectives and tactics for the other Strategic Initiatives in mid October.

I. Pay Equity

1. Objective: Stop inequities in promotional pay

- 1.1 **Tactic:** Impose 15% ceiling on multi-grade promotions except as recommended by Human Resources based on a case by case analysis of the impact to morale of work unit.
- 1.2 **Tactic:** MDT management take a leadership role in a multi-agency study of current pay plans and recommend an equitable statewide pay plan including future review of TACTIC 1.1.

II. Organizational Structure

2. Objective: Assure greater responsiveness, improved communication and organizational effectiveness by flattening organizational structure.

- 2.1 **Tactic:** Define and communicate to all employees the specific purpose of each division, bureau, section and unit.
- 2.2 **Tactic:** Define lines of authority for each division, section and unit.
- 2.3 **Tactic:** Conduct an unbiased review of the current structure's effectiveness and efficiency and recommend changes within one year based on the following considerations.
 - a. Reduce number of layers of management.
 - b. Increase the ratio of "direct reports" by at least 20%. (Note: "direct reports" refers to the number of staff directly reporting to any manager or supervisor.)
 - c. Tie structure to lines of authority and specific purpose and function of each division, bureau, section and unit.

3. Objective: Institute department-wide accountability for policies and procedures.

- 3.1 **Tactic:** Establish a cross-divisional standing committee that reviews current departmental policies for consistency, clarity, and conflict with other policies. This standing committee will also eliminate obsolete policies which are no longer applicable.

3.2 **Tactic:** Up-to-date policies and procedures will be installed and maintained on the VAX.

3.3 **Tactic:** Policy implementations will be audited cyclically.

4. Objective: Develop a system that encourages employees to become responsible for their own performance.

4.1 **Tactic:** Design and implement a pilot program which will result in the design of at least three construction projects over the next three years through a team-management concept.

4.2 **Tactic:** Throughout the pilot program of 4.1 study the feasibility of broader application of the team-management concept including the possibility of a gain-share system to reward employees involved in projects that result in cost savings to the department.

III. Effectiveness/Productivity

5. Objective: Improve accountability of contracted service providers.

5.1 **Tactic:** If feasible reinstate pre-qualification procedures for contractors and consultants.

5.2 **Tactic:** Establish a system for tracking accuracy and total cost on contracted work and products including the number of consultant designs re-worked by in-house forces, quality of original plans, etc.

5.3 **Tactic:** Using tracking system established in tactic 5.2 establish a one year base line.

5.4 **Tactic:** After establishing performance baseline of tactic 5.3 improve cost effectiveness of contracted services by at least 50% within three years by tactics 5.5 and 5.6.

5.5 **Tactic:** Enforce contractor requirements for conformance of materials and services to specifications.

5.6 **Tactic:** Enforce use-of-warranty provisions whenever possible on state funded projects.

IV. Training

6. Objective: Improve management skills, technical skills, work practices, communication skills and preparation for advancement.

6.1 **Tactic:** Develop a task force with representation from all areas to review training needs and design a job specific core training curriculum. To include consideration of video learning materials. Task force is also charged with periodic evaluation and update of training matrix.

- 6.2 **Tactic:** Establish a mandatory training program including new employee orientation (which contains information on the specific purpose of each division, bureau, section and unit), training for management practices, up-to-date training for current positions, safe traffic control practices, managing public involvement meetings, etc.
- 6.3 **Tactic:** Performance plans for all managers will include a 'staff development' element.
- 6.4 **Tactic:** Institute communications training for all employees and management training (leadership, personnel practices, human relations, etc.) to begin immediately.

V. Personnel and Management Practices

- 7. **Objective:** Continue employee work-life-committees to deal with work place issues through an ongoing participatory forum.
 - 7.1 **Tactic:** Committee determines method to perpetuate committee structure and replacement schedule by December, 1992.
 - 7.2 **Tactic:** Using the existing employee chairman, determine membership term and guidelines for ongoing employee-work-life committees.
- 8. **Objective:** Improve communication within the department to improve effectiveness, efficiency and overall work environment.
 - 8.1 **Tactic:** Institute lines of communication between field maintenance, preconstruction and design during preliminary field and soil survey reviews.
 - 8.2 **Tactic:** Develop a policy on response times for internal and external customers.
 - 8.3 **Tactic:** Each employee will write up an operations statement regarding a list of customers. He/she is responsible to show how they intend to comply with timely responses.
 - 8.4 **Tactic:** Develop a bottom-up evaluation matrix that is used to identify supervisors strengths and weaknesses on topics such as communication, decision making ability, etc. to be used to design training and measure progress.
- 9. **Objective:** Department will promote participative management practices.
 - 9.1 **Tactic:** Management training to be designed with management input, involvement and assistance and will conform to a participatory management style. Management skills learned will be implemented on the job.
 - 9.2 **Tactic:** Management training and practices will promote an awareness of human relations including employee reward recognition.

- 10. **Objective:** Modify existing selection procedures
 - 10.1 **Tactic:** Adopt and consistently apply selection procedures for all positions especially Grade (16) sixteen and above.
 - 10.2 **Tactic:** Require managers to have training in proper selection procedures.
 - 10.3 **Tactic:** Human Resources or personnel specialist will provide technical assistance to Selection Committees on evaluating minimum qualifications when they are reviewed.
 - 10.4 **Tactic:** Human Resources prepare a user friendly procedure manual on selection process which is to be posted near job postings in each office and provided to each selection committee before initiating a selection process.
 - 10.5 **Tactic:** Publish procedures including preferences to be used in the selection process in the posting notice to all positions.
 - 10.6 **Tactic:** For Grades (9) nine and above, temporary positions will be filled through a structured testing procedure.
 - 10.7 **Tactic:** On in-house selections use oral input from supervisors and co-workers regarding employees past performance for at least 25% of selections when applicant pool is entirely in-house.
 - 10.8 **Tactic:** Develop a pilot project aimed at improving security on selection tests by developing test banks for the written test for at least (5) five classifications (including: Field Maintenance Supervisor A and B; Engineering Technician 1, 2, 3; Accounting Clerks) within the next year and using random generation to create tests for these positions.
 - 10.9 **Tactic:** Use coding or blind screen for all phases of selection procedure except oral interviews and performance tests.
 - 10.10 **Tactic:** A personnel specialist will tabulate all final scores and pass the results to the supervisor.
- 11. **Objective:** Review promotional systems to improve equal access to positions.
 - 11.1 **Tactic:** Review existing positions and identify methods including career ladders, pre-qualification, and cross-training, to improve promotional opportunities.
 - 11.2 **Tactic:** Review effectiveness and equity of existing career ladder promotion systems.
- 12. **Objective:** Increase decision based on documented research methods.
 - 12.1 **Tactic:** Develop and adhere to a policy requiring all research reports to cite methods and sources.
 - 12.2 **Tactic:** Provide training in research, statistical analysis and citation.

MDT Snowplow Driver Wins State Competition

You could call Gerald Wiseman the "snow cowboy."

Wiseman, an MDT snowplow driver from Baker, finished first overall in a snow rodeo held in Great Falls Sept. 9.

Thirty-nine Montana snowplow, backhoe and loader operators from MDT, city and county governments competed in the 3rd annual Snow Rodeo sponsored by the city of Great Falls and the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the American Public Works Association.

Of a possible tally of 6,800 points, a mere 26.28 points separated Wiseman from the runner-up.

A staunch proponent of safety in operating equipment, Wiseman said, "If you make a mistake here, it costs you points. But (a similar mistake) on the job means you could kill a man."

Competition includes obstacle courses and performance tests with plows installed on the trucks and delicate backhoe and front-end loader maneuvers to test the finer side of contestants control skills, said Duncan Stephenson, maintenance Chief of MDT's Great Falls district, who sat on the competition committee.

Wiseman, who grew up on a ranch 27 miles south of Baker near the Montana-Dakota border, said he hadn't expected to win any event, let alone the overall trophy. He placed first in backhoe competition and third in front-end loader finals, and he scored high on written and diagnostic tests.



Gerald Wiseman of Baker concentrates on placing a swinging weight in a small pipe during backhoe competition at the Snow Rodeo

Photo courtesy of Wayne Arnst

Event co-chairman Marty Basta said written and diagnostic scores account for about one third of the overall scoring. A skillful equipment operator who doesn't know safety rules, regulations and laws about equipment use wouldn't do as well in

overall competition.

Smiling at two belt buckles, a plaque, a certificate and the overall trophy, Wiseman said modestly, "I just had a lucky day and I got the breaks."

Experience in operating heavy equipment probably did not hurt Wiseman's chances, however. Although only working as a snowplow operator for three years, Wiseman, 43, was city foreman of Baker for 10 years and had been a construction worker for 10 years before that. He is married and has three grown children.

In his years of operating and working around heavy equipment, he has been fortunate to not have been involved in any major accidents, Wiseman said. But there have been several night snowplowing operations in blizzard conditions that have gotten "real hazardous." At times the only thing visible in a blizzard is the truck's windshield, he said.

The problem, he said, is lack of visibility for the plow operator and that "the public doesn't see us as being a danger they can get into."

Telling of motorists following a snowplow too closely, attempting to pass the plow and taking unnecessary risks, Wiseman said "There are times you (the snowplow operator) are virtually blind in that piece of equipment. If they (reckless motorists) slow down, they might live longer."

Courtesy of the Great Falls Tribune

Billings District and Missoula Office Receives Seat Belt Usage Award

Congratulations to members of the Billings, Lewistown and Missoula offices for buckling up.

Governor Stan Stephens presented the Billings district with the 70 percent plus award for seat belt usage on June 18 after checks revealed an average of 83.45 percent seat belt usage. Missoula aver-

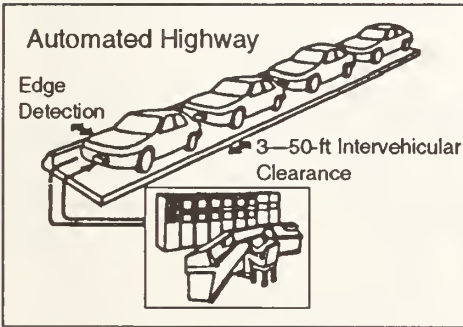
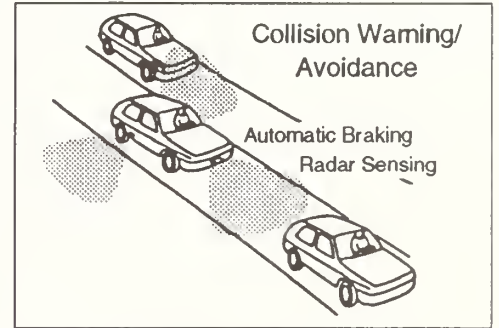
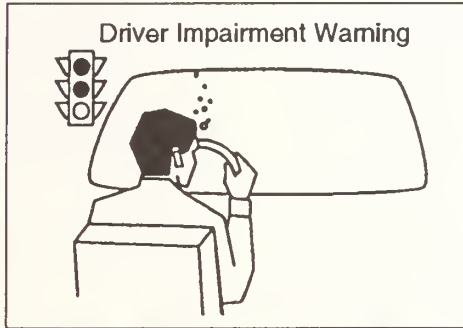
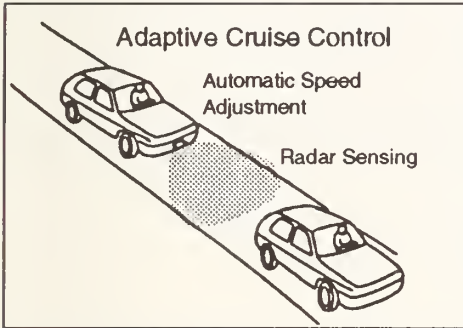
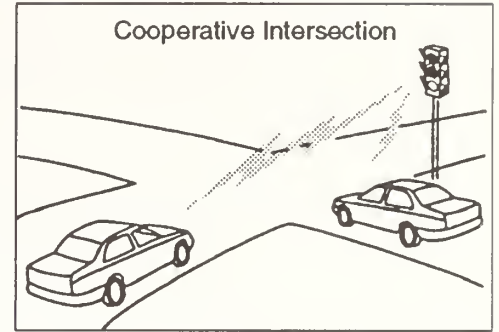
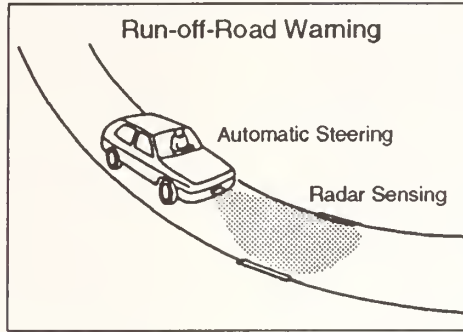
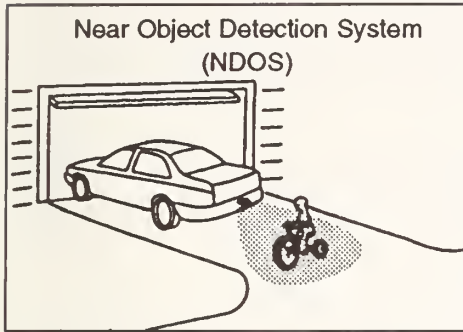
aged 85 percent and was presented with an award on August 26 from Attorney General Marc Racicot.

Billings was the first MDT division to receive the award, which was presented by the governor's office in conjunction with a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

program which rewards organizations having seat belt usage of at least 70 percent before the end of 1992.

NHTSA's goal is for 70 percent or more of drivers nationwide to wear seat belts, and organizations reaching that percentage receive an award, said Barb Martin, MDT Organization Development Bureau Chief.

"Smart" Cars and Roads in the Future?



Your car may soon be "smarter" than you are.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is researching several state of the art crash avoidance techniques, one of which is the "intelligent vehicle-highway system."

Despite driver education programs, automobile collisions continue to remain the leading cause of death from injury, according to NHTSA. So one option to reduce traffic collision in-

volves various electronic sensing devices, mounted on automobiles and on the highway system which would automatically modify driving habits.

The research programs are being undertaken in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, the Research and Special Projects Administration and the a public-private organization promoting intelligent vehicles.

FORUMS, from page 1

Straehl said some of the local issues which have arisen from the forums have been:

- positive response to the Save the Secondaries program at all of the meetings in southwestern Montana;
- use and safety concerns concerning Gallatin Canyon in Bozeman;
- interest about increasing future passenger rail service in Butte;
- concern about moving truck traf-

fic re-routed from Gallatin Canyon through Madison Canyon;

- alternate forms of transportation to move people through the Ravalli valley, and interest in transportation alternatives in the Lolo-Missoula project in Hamilton.

People generally see it would make sense to have a multi-modal transportation commission, said Straehl, but she said there was some concern about one mode gaining dominance over another.

"Direct input from an informed

populace is a good place to start when looking for ways to improve service," said Rothwell.

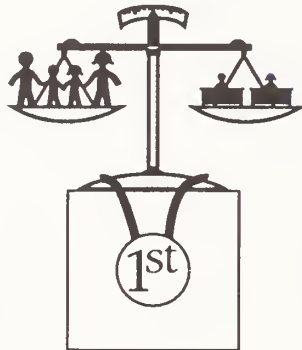
The forum meetings are being presented by Straehl, Assistant Director Steve Kologi, a district engineer, a highway commissioner and two or three other members of the Helena office. Straehl said the large cast is an attempt at "covering all the bases" of anticipated questions.

For further information, a booklet is available in the district and area offices.

The Olympic Challenge— Balancing Work And Parenting

Successful balancing involves looking at your goals, reviewing your options and learning to cope by managing your time. Some ideas that might help you to accomplish this are:

- **When placing a child in child care for the first time:**
 - Investigate the care facility. Ask your EAP or other parents for referrals.
 - Envision your child with the care provider. If you cannot do this, maybe you should get to know your provider better.
 - Smooth the transition by discussing the facility with your child.
- **Plan ahead to prevent problems.**
 - Learn company policies.
 - Set up alternative care for a sick child. Know your care provider's policy ahead of time.
 - Know what to do in the event of an emergency.
- **Save time in the home.**
 - Use a calendar to record everyone's appointments and activities. This helps eliminate surprises.
 - Delegate different tasks.
 - Consolidate errands.
 - Set all bills aside and take time twice a month to pay them.
- **Learn how to manage stress.**
 - Organize and plan ahead
 - Take frequent breaks to relax and collect your thoughts.



Test Your Interview knowledge

Do you know what you can and cannot do during a job interview? Answer "true" or "false" to the following items.

1. You may describe tasks to a disabled person and ask if he or she feels capable of doing the job.
2. You may suggest that a candidate is not suited for a job because of a physical disability.
3. You may ask whether a candidate is a citizen of the U.S. and, if not, whether the visa will permit him or her to work.
4. You may suggest to an older person that he or she is not suitable because the pace is too hectic.
5. If a female applicant volunteers the fact that she has plans for a family, you may then discuss the situation with her.

Answers:

1. true; 2. false; 3. false; 4. true; 5. false

Change Your Diet and Lower Your Cholesterol

- **Eat Less Fat:** limit fats to less than one-third of your total calories.
- **Eat More Fiber:** soluble fiber, such as beans, fruit and grain, reduces cholesterol by preventing it from being absorbed by your body.
- **Eat Less Cholesterol:** eating high cholesterol foods, like butter, eggs and processed foods, may increase your body's cholesterol level.
- **Eat More Starches:** complex carbohydrates in vegetables, grains and beans help to dilute the fat you eat.
- **Drink Less Caffeine and Alcohol:** Drink no more than two cups of coffee and two alcoholic beverages a day. Both increase the fat in your blood.

What to do When Your Boss Makes a Dumb Move . . .

When your boss makes what you think is a dumb move, it's important for you to understand his or her personality and reasoning behind the decision. This will help you decide on intelligent counter-arguments. Next, determine how direct you can be. Request a review of the decision rather than a reversal. This way you aren't threatening your supervisor. Last, make sure you're prepared. When you meet with your boss, make sure you can suggest alternatives and how these will serve the company in the future—costs, profits, productivity. This will give your supervisor information to use if the decision came from higher management.

Food for Thought

If you want to be the picture of health, make sure you have a happy frame of mind.

—Source: *Bits and Pieces*

Collator's Tongue

When you collate or leaf through photocopied material, do not lick your page-turning finger. The toner on the pages could cause a chemical burn on your tongue.

Psychological Paychecks Pay Off

When people do a good job, it may not be possible to reward them tangibly.

But there's no limit to the intangible rewards you can provide. Consultant Price Pritchett and Ron Pound call these forms of compensation "Psychological Paychecks."

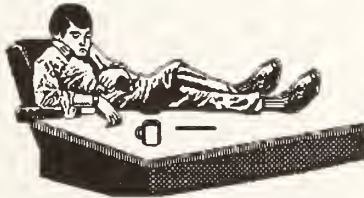
Examples given include:

- giving a compliment or word of encouragement about a specific job well done;
- offering a listening ear and an empathic response;
- asking their opinion about something and then acting on their suggestions when possible;
- saying thanks;
- writing a short memo expressing your appreciation for what they've done and also sending a copy to their boss;
- during meetings, or in front of others, singling out individuals for a word of praise for good job performance.

Source: Price Pritchett and Ron Pound, Business as Unusual.

Are Bad Habits Holding You Back?

Over the years we have the tendency to acquire bad habits. Check yourself against this list to see if, perhaps, you are holding yourself back.



- Are you rude? (do you interrupt, ignore others in the hallway or talk in an overly loud voice?)
- Do you criticize or gossip about other departments?
- Do you embarrass others?
- Do you hog all of the recognition?
- Do you overcontrol or over-supervise?
- Do you lack enthusiasm or complain too much?

Accident Tally for August

Offices which registered no vehicular accidents for the month of August were: Bozeman; Miles City; Wolf Point; and the Helena Headquarter.

Those offices with no personal injuries for August were: Havre; Lewistown; Miles City; and Wolf Point.

Department-wide, there were 21 vehicular accidents for the month and 12 personal injuries.

More Food for Thought

A closed mouth gathers no feet.

Manager's Corner

Before you take a vacation, you might want to remember these tips:

- Tell those who need to know how long you'll be gone.
- Delegate as much work as possible leaving clear instructions.
- Give your staff your itinerary with telephone numbers where you can be reached. Make sure you keep a copy.
- Assign someone to look for important mail.
- Schedule a time to call in to check on urgent business.
- Upon your return, spend an hour organizing your paper work into categories.
- Conduct a staff meeting to review what occurred while you were gone.

—Communication Briefings, 1986

Itchy, Itchy, Scratchy, Scratchy

Anytime you work outdoors you risk coming into contact with poisonous plants. Poison ivy grows everywhere in Canada and the United States except the extreme southwestern states.

The plant can be a woody shrub, creeping ground cover, or a vine climbing as high as 30 feet! The only real clue to identifying poison ivy is the leaves; one three-leaf cluster leads off from each node on the twig.

What to do if you come into contact with poison ivy?

1. Wash with soap and water within 10 minutes.
2. After washing, the affected area can be treated with ferric chloride (see your pharmacist) or rubbing alcohol.
3. To relieve discomfort, try calamine lotion, hydrocortisone cream or baking soda dissolved in water.

The reaction will usually appear one to three days after exposure and will last about a week.

Even More Food for Thought

Half the worry in the world is caused by people trying to make decisions before they have sufficient knowledge on which to base a decision.

Service Awards

Service awards were presented in the following categories:

35 years

Melvin H. Lindgren, Victor R. Scheuffele.

25 years

Molly A. Hardy, Marvin H. Henderson, M. Keith Roane, Jack O. Roberts.

20 years

Dennis R. Cline, Dale W. Sirucek, Lonny F. White.

15 years

Richard L. Allen, Thomas W. Bengtson, Kevin T. Brewer, Thomas L. Brownlow, Larry L. Bullock, Glen T. Carter, Tim W. Carter, Eli P. Damjanovich, Robert D. French, Kenneth T. Gilreath, Edward W. Gordon, Martin H. Martin, Patrick J. Ott, Walter E. Raffelson, Edward J. Shea, Donald R. Sandine, Donald A. Sansaver, Patrick A. Wall, Nels L. Wilkins, Benjamin D. Williamson, Nels L. Zook.

10 years

William J. Bernhardt, Joseph J.

Church, Chris R. Clearman, Todd W. Dufner, Russel D. Dupuis, James A. Lewis, Robert James Maphies, Gayna Miros, John T. Nelson, Duane Olson, Scott D. Perkins, Warren V. Quinlan, Bonnie L. Sedita.

5 years

Lynda L. Faulkner, Adrian A. Goroski, Carlow Lagomasino, Gerald L. Mattila, Redge R. Meierhenry, Jeffry S. Mjelstad, Gerald L. Norwood, Carole A. Olson, Kenneth L. Rockeman, Robert L. Sarrazin, William T. Spencer, Floyd T. Turner, Martha A. Vogt, Walter R. Williams, Doug J. Wilmot.

Retirements

William E. Pedula, Missoula, Maintenance Superintendent.

Jack R. Ricker, Helena, Right-of-Way Bureau Chief.

James R. Roan, Billings, Equipment Operator II.

Ronald J. Turnacliff, Kalispell, Field Supervisor A.

DIRECTOR, from page 1

The results of the employee committee's work on organizational effectiveness and improving the work environment are in and they're printed in their entirety in this issue of the *Interchange*.

There are lots of good ideas and it's very informative reading, so please take time to look through it.

You're seeing these suggestions in their unedited form—the steering committee ultimately makes the decision on which of all these ideas we'll pursue first and which ones will have to wait or can't be pursued.

But the agreement was that everyone would be able to see the full list of suggested objectives and tactics and so that's what's presented here.

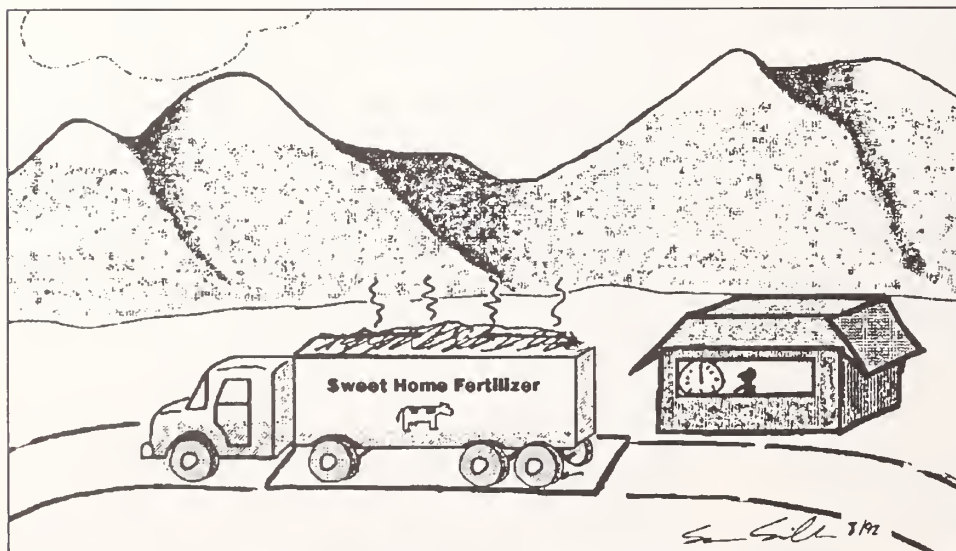
As I said in the past, it's a tough assignment we've taking on. I look forward to putting these ideas into practice, but that's going to continue to take time and effort and I encourage you to keep involved and help us work through the important steps that lie ahead.

State Phone Credit Card System Changes

If you use a state-provided long distance phone credit card, be ready for a system change over. Card holders should have received a new card and Personal Identification Number (PIN) by now. The old cards won't work after October 1st.

Using the new card requires dialing an "800" number first to connect to the long distance service, then dialing the desired number. Potential inconvenience of the switch is justified by substantial savings according to Department of Administration officials.

Some PIN's and cards were mailed separately, but PINs are essential to make the new card work. There's a substantial additional charge for not using the new system after the October 1st. Lavelle Brannin of D. of A. can answer your questions at 444-1830.



An example of gross vehicle weight.

INTERchange

Employee Newsletter

The employee newsletter is published by the Public Affairs Bureau, Montana Department of Transportation:

Interchange staff:
Sean Seville
Dennis Unsworth,

The following contributed articles for this issue:

The Organizational Development Bureau
Nancy Ostle

Submissions and correspondence should be addressed to:

Public Affairs Bureau
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-9726
(406) 444-6200